CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 2 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELARUS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT ON THE INDIAN AND PAKISTANI NUCLEAR TESTS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS ON 1 JUNE 1998

I have the honour to forward to you a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on 1 June 1998 concerning the underground nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan.

I would be most grateful if you would arrange for this statement to be distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed): S. Agurtsou
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

It was with alarm and anxiety that the Republic of Belarus learned of the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the series of nuclear tests carried out push the world towards the proliferation of nuclear weapons, mark a step in the nuclear arms race and create significant additional obstacles to further reductions in nuclear armaments.

These actions run counter to the efforts of the world community to strengthen the regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at the global and regional levels, which is a very important factor in international stability and security.

The Republic of Belarus, which a few years ago made a historic choice in renouncing its existing nuclear potential, and which is a party to a number of major agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament, cannot but feel particular concern and alarm at this turn of events.

The Republic of Belarus calls on all countries with military nuclear programmes which have not become parties to the NPT to review their current nuclear policy and accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and to work for a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, on which mankind is pinning its hopes for a nuclear-free world in the twenty-first century.

The events of recent days have heightened our alarm about a possible chain reaction involving nuclear proliferation not only in the South Asian region but also beyond. The lack of legal obligations vis-à-vis the international community will furnish a favourable context in that respect.

It is well known that the Republic of Belarus, on the basis of its consistent anti-nuclear policy, its fears for the fate of future generations and the fate of the European continent and the world as a whole, and in the light of contemporary realities, has called and continues to call on all countries to support the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-free space in Central and Eastern Europe.

We in the Republic of Belarus are convinced that the achievement of this goal will strengthen security and trust on the continent, will prevent the geographical spread of nuclear weapons and will constitute a significant step towards the further consolidation of peace and stability in Europe and throughout the world.

In our view, all countries which do not possess nuclear weapons could assume agreed obligations relating to the complete renunciation of the deployment of nuclear weapons on their territory.

Minsk, 1 June 1998